

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
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R 061512Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5512
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 5324

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS PBOR ET SO
SUBJECT: ETHIOPIAN CLAIMS FOLLOWING JIJIGA CLASHES

REF A. ADDIS ABABA 5288 B. ADDIS ABABA 5258 C. ADDIS ABABA 5226

SUMMARY: ETHIOPIAN MEDIA CLAIMING MAJOR VICTORIES IN
COUNTERING THREE SOMALI OFFENSIVES IN JIJIGA, DIRE DAWA
AND DOLLO VICINITIES. QUANTITY OF SOMALI EQUIPMENT RE-
PORTED TO BE EITHER DESTROYED OR CAPTURED DURING BATTLES
TOTAL 72 TANKS, 25 ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS(APC'S),
FIVE ADDITIONAL MIGS (BRINGING TOTAL TO 28), AND NUMBER
OF ARTILLERY AND ANTI-AIRCRAFT PIECES. MEDIA FURTHER
REPORTED PMAC CHAIRMAN LT. COL. MENGISTU PERSONALLY LED
COMBINED REGULAR AND MILITIA TROOPS IN MARCH FROM HARAR
TO JIJIGA AND COMMANDED FORCES IN JIJIGA BATTLES.
ETHIOPIAN LOSSES CLAIMED TO BE MINOR BUT NATIONAL REVO-
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LUTIONARY OPERATIONS COMMAND (NROC) EXPECTS MOGADISCIO
REGIME TO LAUNCH ANOTHER MAJOR OFFENSIVE SHORTLY. END SUMMARY.

1. ETHIOPIAN MEDIA CHARACTERIZED FIGHTING IN JIJIGA
VICINITY AS DECISIVE BATTLE. IN FULFILLMENT OF AUG 24
PLEDGE TO LEAD TROOPS INTO BATTLE, ETHIOPIAN HERALD
REPORTED MENGISTU LED ADVANCE TO JIJIGA FROM HARAR,

"WIPING OUT SOMALI SOLDIERS AND THEIR ARAB SUPPORTERS". DURING MARCH AND GREATLY BOOSTING TROOP MORALE. PMAC MEMBERS IN CHARGE OF DEFENSE, LT. COL. TESFAYE GEBRE-KIDAN AND OF MILITARY POLITICAL AFFAIRS, MSGT. LEGESSE ASFAW, AS WELL AS OTHER PMAC MEMBERS ACCOMPANIED MENGISTU. (RELIABLE SOURCE REPORTED MENGISTU HAD RETURNED TO ADDIS BY SEPT 4.) NROC REPORTED SOMALIA DEPLOYED ITS FIFTH, NINTH, AND TENTH MOTORIZED INFANTRY BRIGADES (BDE), SEVENTH TANK BDE WITH 93 TANKS, ONE ARTILLERY BDE, AND 3 ANTI-AIRCRAFT BATTALIONS IN JIJIGA FIGHTING. ETHIOPIANS CLAIM TO HAVE DESTROYED 45 TANKS COMPLETELY, CAPTURED 17 OTHERS, DESTROYED 23 APC'S, CAPTURED 4 ARTILLERY PIECES, AND KILLED TOTAL OF 778 SOLDIERS DURING JIJIGA BATTLES. IN ADDITION, FIVE MORE MIGS REPORTEDLY SHOT DOWN, BRINGING TOTAL TO 28. ALLEGING TENTH BDE "PRIDE OF FASCIST BARRE REGIME," NROC CLAIMED BDE HAD SUFFERED HEAVY LOSSES AND RENDERED INEFFECTIVE.

2. IN CONFIRMATION FIGHTING WAS CONTINUING IN DIRE DAWA VICINITY, ETHIOPIAN MEDIA REPORTED SOMALIA DEPLOYED MOTORIZED INFANTRY BDE, TANK BATTALION, AND ANTI-AIRCRAFT BATTALION IN AREA. DURING AUG 31-SEPT 2 FIGHTING, 10 TANKS OF 15TH BDE, WHICH HAD PARTICIPATED IN INITIAL DIRE DAWA ASSAULT, WERE DESTROYED. ON SOUTHER FRONT, NROC REPORTED 42 SOMALI SOLDIERS KILLED, 275 OTHERS WOUNDED, AND TWO APC'S CAPTURED IN DOLLO VICINITY. (WE NOT SURE WHETHER CONFIDENTIAL

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DOLO INTENDED OR SOME OTHER PLACE WE CAN'T FIND ON MAP.) IT FURTHER CLAIMED SOMALIA HAD DEPLOYED 13TH AND 17TH MOTORIZED INFANTRY BDE'S, TWO TANK BATTALIONS, TWO ARTILLERY BATTALIONS, AND TWO ANTI-AIRCRAFT BATTALIONS FOR THIS BATTLE.

3. ETHIOPIAN MEDIA CLAIMED THAT HIGH CASUALTIES IN MEN AND DESTRUCTION OF EQUIPMENT HAS CREATED WIDESPREAD DEMORALIZATION AMONG CIVILIAN SOMALI POPULATION. NROC NOTED THAT MOGADISCIO REGIME RECEIVING INFLUX OF MEN AND ARMS FROM REACTIONARY ARAB SUPPORTERS TO LAUNCH ANOTHER MAJOR OFFENSIVE, AND THAT CIVILIAN AIRCRAFT OF THOSE REGIMES SPENT WHOLE DAY SEPT 5 TRANSPORTING WAR MATERIAL AND TROOPS OF UNIDENTIFIED NATIONALITY TO HARGEISA. ARRIVAL OF ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FORCES, ESCORTED BY FIGHTER PLANES, ADDS NEW DIMENSION TO WAR, NROC CONCLUDED.

4. COMMENT: WHILE PERSONAL PARTICIPATION IN FIGHTING BY MENGISTU MAY HAVE BEEN MOSTLY BRAVADO, IT NO DOUBT WILL HAVE AFFECT ON MORALE OF ETHIOPIAN TROOPS, REPORTED DEFENSIVE SUCCESSES AT THREE LOCALES, IF TRUE, WILL GREATLY IMPROVE ETHIOPIAN CAPABILITIES TO REPULSE

FUTURE SOMALI THRUSTS AND COULD EVENTUALLY TURN TIDE OF
OGADEN IN ETHIOPIAN FAVOR. MEDIA PHOTOS LEND SUPPORT
TO ETHIOPIAN CLAIMS OF SOMALI EQUIPMENT LOSSES, AND
IF LOSSES ACTUALLY TRUE, THEY MUST PUT SERIOUS DENT IN
SOMALI OFFENSIVE CAPABILITY.
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